

GRACE HAPPENS HERE IN WORSHIP & PRAYER - WEEK 1



FROM THE RECTOR



Stewardship is one of the most empowering ideas in Christianity. But, mostly, we get stuck in the pledge card as a decision about membership and budgets. That is a real shame. Stewardship points to who we are and what we are called to be as a community.

We are image bearers of God (Genesis 1:26-27) in creation. We are like God, at least possibly. I don't live up to that possibility, but I have tasted it in moments of subtle greatness like clearing land on our family farm, carrying heavy loads for a Habitat for Humanity build, worshipping at a funeral for a homeless man, sitting in care next to a hospital bed, holding a child.

We are uniquely gifted by God to care for the creation and each other. Our minds, our abilities to plan and create, and to solve problems on even a global scale, our innate love of other creatures all point us toward our role as stewards. The steward was the manager left in charge of the house when the master was away. They carried on as the master would, bearing the master's image.

When we give to the ministries of our congregation, when we offer up our tithe to the great work that extends beyond us in the church of God, we are acting as stewards and living into our true identity.

As a community, we serve as a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). We are royal because we are made children of God by the power of the Holy Spirit in Christ (John 1:18). We are a priesthood because we stand between our God and the world, offering the prayers and concerns of the world to God, receiving God's grace and then giving that to the world in our word, actions, and ministries.

Here at Grace, the question is simply, Who is this God we pray to and represent to the world? Our answer is in our open table, our Jubilee Ministries, at hospital bedside, and in our checkbooks and in our calendars.

We are the stewards of Grace. All of us, each of us, together. Thank God, it is what we are made for.

BIOGRAPHY OF JAMES DEATON



Left-Right: Jason McKinney & James Deaton

As I mull over the various streams of Christianity that have shaped my faith, I often call myself an ecumenical mutt. Growing up in Southern Ohio, we went to church anytime the doors were open, and I always had my well-worn King James Bible in hand. This was where I first learned how much Jesus loved me, the reliability of God's Word, and the need for salvation. But as I got older I began to think for myself and question certain things in search of meaning. I started befriending folks who weren't Free Will Baptist, Baptist of any kind, or even Protestant!

College was a good place for that. It was also a place where I came to grips with my sexual orientation and what that meant for me as a Christian. I carried that heaviness and secrecy with me for several years, until I graduated and moved to the Chicago suburbs where I started my career as a technical writer. The Windy City gave me the space to mature and learn about life. Living there also allowed me to meet Christians who were not the stereotypical kind I knew. These people thought differently and yet had a vibrant faith in God. It really rocked my world.

Slowly but surely the Holy Spirit called me back to the fold. I began attending church again and got involved in ecumenical groups and Bible studies that helped people reconcile their faith and sexuality. God's healing hands began to untangle the theological cobwebs in my mind, and my heart softened to the Spirit's voice. God is so patient, so persistent. That's when I began to consider a more formal call on my life by entering a United Methodist seminary.

Going to seminary was a pivotal period in my life. For the first time, I was able—in a formal, structured way—to articulate why I believe what I believe, and to discern what gifts I had for ministry. I wasn't sure where God was leading, but I was open. It was at this time that I also met my partner, of ten years now, Jason, and we began a shared life of love together. Finding a man of faith was extremely important to me, and I am so blessed to have him by my side.

MORNING PRAYER - PROPER 25

Morning Prayer – 22nd Sunday after Pentecost – Proper 25
O Lord our God, you have given us all things, so that we might delight in your light and serve you in all creation. As we think and pray about ourselves, our time, and our possessions; equip us to give outlandishly these things to further our faith, build your Kingdom, and bring others to relationship with you, our Creator, our Redeemer, and the one who makes us Holy. Amen.

Psalm 118

Readings from the Daily Office Lectionary, page 990, BCP

Sunday	Haggai 1:1 – 2:9	Luke 10:25-37
Monday	Zechariah 1:1-17	Matthew 12:43-50
Tuesday	Ezra 5:1-17	Matthew 13:1-9
Wednesday	Ezra 6:1-22	Matthew 13:10-17
Thursday	Nehemiah 1:1-11	Matthew 13:18-23
Friday	Nehemiah 2:1-20	Matthew 13:24-30
Saturday	Nehemiah 4:1-23	Matthew 13:31-35

Psalm 91

Evening Prayer - Proper 25
Lord, You are in the midst of us and we are called by your Name: Do not forsake us, O Lord our God.

Psalm 91

Readings from the Daily Office Lectionary, page 990, BCP
Sunday Acts 18:24-19:7 Luke 10:25-37
Monday Revelation 1:4-20 Matthew 12:43-50
Tuesday Revelation 4:1-11 Matthew 13:1-9
Wednesday Revelation 5:1-10 Matthew 13:10-17
Thursday Revelation 5:11-6:11 Matthew 13:18-23
Friday Revelation 6:12-7:4 Matthew 13:24-30
Saturday Revelation 7:9-17 Matthew 13:31-35

Reflections: *Silent and Written Prayers*

The Lord's Prayer
The Church in our neighborhood and around the World
For those persecuted today for the sake of the Gospel
For our Nation and Leaders
The work we share in our Parish, area, and world
For our new Rector and Priest
Thanksgiving, praise, and concerns

Reflections: *Silent and Written Prayers*

The Lord's Prayer
Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Collect

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Jesus; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the dislocated and afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

The Antiphon

Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping,
that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia
The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen.

Collect
Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen.

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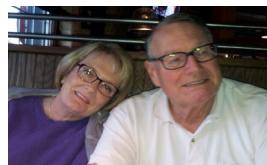
Reflections of Worship and Prayer



by **Dave Eitland**

Grace states, *As Episcopal Christians we Worship at home daily and together weekly.*" For the past six years, I have been transformed by the worship community at Grace. Rector Daniel had the audacity to ask each of us to not only come to worship each weekend but also to worship daily at home using the Book of Common Prayer.

The Book of Common Prayer has the audacity to insist that I pray the hours of morning, noon, evening, and compline each day. It gives me a daily calendar of readings of the Bible that in two years will take me through about 85% of the Bible. It offers me the opportunity to pray, reflect, study, and be with God in a moment of time daily. This has given me a base to live life grounded in the faith, God, and the work we do together. It has informed my faith, deepen my understanding, and given me a rhythm and anchor into my soul deepening my faith that translates into action.



by **Bill Foster** I've been an Episcopalian for over 66 years, been an acolyte when I was young, a reader for 30 years, on Vestry, committees, and such for years: but I have never been good at praying....no one took the time to teach me. I found out it is sort of an art; you have to get at least the basics figured out, then it begins to get easier.

Four years ago for Lent, Daniel asked us to pick a prayer partner, at least two people to pray for, and have at it. I picked my wife Deb, and today we are still praying together. Our format has changed, a lot has changed. We have seen one person survive cancer, another die from it. Another is on his way to recovering from drugs.

We then were involved with personally with serious issues, I with surgeries, Deb with kidney failure...Boy! we put what had learned about praying to our own use! But wait a moment, there were other voices on the line. we could feel others praying with us and for us. For both of us the meaning of "I'll say a prayer for you" finally had true meaning!

We both now are returning to good health, and have begun again to actively pray for others. We do not pray every night together but when we can't at least one of us is "on line." Refer to Luke 11:9-10, and *"Pray until the answer comes."*



by **Ann Hackett** I am invited to share my prayer life; I hardly feel qualified. I know others around me pray readily, deeply and often. My prayer life is not that at all, but it's different than it was 5, 10 and 15 years ago.

No regular habit exists, yet. But that's a goal. I have every excuse for not taking the time to pray regularly, but when I invite God into the conversations of my mind and heart, something happens. Prayer for me is like a conversation with God. Conversations are usually two way, but, in the case of my prayers, I do all the talking. The hard part is listening. I'm not good at sitting and listening for God's response or recognizing it when it comes.

The frequency of my prayer life has changed. That's been intentional. I'm not as timid in the company of others to express a prayer. Prayer-like words and thoughts come more easily. Maybe that's because I'm surrounded by piles of spiritual books, and I'm more curious to read them than I was in the past. Saying a prayer aloud is my small way of declaring I'm a Christian, a child of God and I make God a part of my life. Praying privately is my way of improving my relationship with God, a God whose love I want to know more.

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Reflections of Worship and Prayer



by **Barbara Klugh** I love to worship God in our community, and I love the beauty and the order of the Episcopal liturgy. I've never missed Sunday worship except in the rare times I've been out of town or ill. Why would I want to? I'm fed and strengthened by the Word of God, by inspiring sermons, and, especially, by the sacrament of Holy Communion. Then I get to hang out with a group of amazing people after the service.

Early in his ministry, Daniel suggested that we read the Daily Office, and I made it a priority. I started with morning prayer, which is the spiritual foundation with which I begin my day. Over time, I added noonday prayer, evening prayer, and compline. Because of this daily ritual, I've become more trusting of God's presence and protection, more grateful for the daily blessings that come my way, more resilient to the ups and downs in my life, and more willing to follow the radical teachings of Jesus. It's a gift I give to myself.



by **Bill Montgomery** The time that I spend praying is usually spent spontaneously talking with the Lord. These talks may be thoughts of appreciation or asking for help choosing appropriate paths forward. Over the last year, I have also noticed that at meal times with friends, I am often asked to say a grace or blessing to start the meal. As the time approaches for my commissioning as a Stephen Minister, I look forward to offering prayers with care receivers. By being active in several aspects of prayer, I do feel that my prayer life is becoming a more central part of my life.



by **Jeff Tibbits** My parents instilled going to church and praying regularly very early in my brother's and my lives. They lead by example. Every night and before every meal we prayed together as a family. Attending Sunday school, church worship services, and Lutheran grade school for eight years played paramount roles in my early Christian education and life.

My Christian education and life as a disciple of Christ continue to grow strongly here at Grace Church, and I have all of you at Grace to thank for that, especially our rectors Daniel and Kathryn, as well as the many volunteers at Grace who inspire me to live and breathe my faith further. Reading, studying, and discussing the Bible happily remain activities I enjoy not only across several generations in my own family but also in my extended family here at Grace. Thank you and may God continue to guide and bless us all.

Biography of James Deaton Continued

Graduation was imminent, and I was still struggling with where God was leading me. Ordination? Chaplaincy? In the meantime, I happened upon a job listing for managing editor at a Christian publisher. I interviewed and, as they say, the rest is history. I've worked for Brethren Press, the denominational publishing house for the Church of the Brethren, for eight years now. In many ways I do consider my work full-time ministry. We create devotional materials, books, and curriculum. The Brethren, in case you don't know, are practical and peace-loving Anabaptists, akin to Mennonites. These salt-of-the-earth, simple folks have taught me a lot!

That brings us to the present. I telecommute from my home office in lovely Leelanau County, where we moved in 2011. One of the goals I had after moving here was to find a church home. Through a period of spiritual direction, discernment, and church visitation, the Holy Spirit kept bringing me back to Grace. Finding this place has certainly been a "God thing" on my lifelong journey toward healing and wholeness. Thank you for opening your hearts and arms to us.